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GUITAR

Administration launches campaign against counterfeit goods

November 29, 2011 | By Terry Frieden, CNN

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In an effort to confront the growing problem of global counterfeiting of U.S. consumer goods, the government Tuesday launched a campaign designed to grab the public's attention.

A series of catchy and dramatic TV and radio public service announcements and print ads were unveiled at a White House event headed by Attorney General Eric Holder and several other administration officials.

The officials stressed the negative impact the sale of tons of counterfeit goods is having on the U.S. economy. The majority of the "knockoff" products originate in China, officials said.

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The low prices available from the online crime groups are hard for consumers to resist.

"The lure of the bargain overcomes the moral compass every time," said Ann Harkins, president and CEO of the National Crime Prevention Council.

Officials said research shows the American public believes intellectual property theft is a harmless, victimless practice.

"Make no mistake, IP crimes are anything but victimless," Holder said. "... these crimes can destroy jobs, suppress innovation, and jeopardize the health and safety of consumers."

Officials emphasized the personal danger from buying cheaper fake medicines and pills online.

They also focused on the cost to artists, musicians, and others who are victims of knockoff DVDs and free downloads.

That message was effectively driven home by a single performer.

In a dramatic new PSA unveiled Tuesday, a young female street musician sings and plays her guitar, and watches dumbfounded as members of her audience start taking money rather than putting it in her open guitar case. The announcer then declares "illegal downloads are not victimless crimes."

The singer-songwriter Addie Braunley was on hand for the event.

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